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ABSTRACT

This report presents the final evaluation of the MegaSkills School Program pilot adoption at Maupin Elementary School in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1994-95. The MegaSkills programs are designed to help students develop skills and attitudes related to school success, confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, caring, teamwork, common sense, and problem solving. Included are parent workshops, a classroom curriculum, and parent-school linkage materials. Maupin School is a inner city elementary magnet school with 80 percent of school enrollment qualifying for free/reduced lunch. A MegaSkills School Committee was responsible for planning and coordinating all program activities. Sources of evaluation data included on-going observations and meetings with the MegaSkills committee and the evaluator; year-end focus group questions for the committee; year-end surveys of professional staff, parent workshop leaders and support staff; pre- and post-program surveys of about 50 percent of students and a convenience sample of parents; and internal records and documents. The key findings of the evaluation included the following: (1) there were consistent positive changes in student attitudes and behavior, reflected in teachers' ratings, parents' reports, and students' self reports; (2) the program had school-wide positive effects on school climate, student behavioral expectations, parent involvement, and the development of a common language about student behaviors for school/home communication; and (3) workshop leaders and parents reported enhanced parental understanding of what children do at school, increased parental confidence, and willingness and ability to discuss their own children with teachers. (A fact sheet on the MegaSkills Education Center and the Executive Summary are appended.) (KDFB)

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Maupin MegaSkills® School-Wide Program

Final Evaluation Report

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MAUPIN MEGASKILLS® SCHOOL PROGRAM

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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MAUPIN MEGASKILLS® SCHOOL PROGRAM

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

OVERVIEW

This report is the final evaluation of the MegaSkills School Program which was adopted and implemented at the Maupin Elementary School, Louisville, KY, over the period from January, 1994 through June, 1995. It summarizes and discusses data, collected over the 1994-95 school year, dealing with the implementation and impact of the program.

The report includes the following sections:

- The MegaSkills School Concept
- Pilot Adoption by Maupin to Create The First MegaSkills School
- Documentation/Evaluation of the Program: Data Collection Procedures
- Program Implementation over the 1994-95 School Year
- Impact of the Program on Students, Families, and the School as a Whole
- Program and Institutionalization: Plans and Directions for the Program in 1995-96 and Beyond
- Conclusions and Recommendations

THE MEGASKILLS SCHOOL CONCEPT

The MegaSkills programs developed by The Home and School Institute (HSI) focus on helping students to develop the skills and attitudes needed for success in school and beyond. Based on report cards, personnel records, and interviews with educators and employers, Dr. Dorothy Rich, founder and president of HSI, identified in *MegaSkills*, first published in 1988, the ten MegaSkills: Confidence, Motivation, Effort, Responsibility, Initiative, Caring, Teamwork, Common Sense, and Problem Solving.

Over the past seven years, HSI has developed training programs built upon the MegaSkills: Leader Training for MegaSkills Parent Workshops which focuses on how parents can help their children develop these skills and attitudes in the home; the MegaSkills Essentials Curriculum for the Classroom which focuses on teaching the MegaSkills directly in the classroom; and most recently (1994) the New MegaSkills Bond Connection which focuses on how schools and parents can communicate and work more closely together in support of student achievement and on how to implement the parent involvement mandates of new Federal education legislation.

The MegaSkills School brings all these programs together in a systematic delivery system to create a school-wide MegaSkills environment. The underlying rationale is that students will have increased opportunities to learn and develop these skills and attitudes when they are consistently taught and reinforced from all sides: the classroom; the home; the school cafeteria, playground, corridors, and even the school buses. The MegaSkills approach provides complementary roles for the entire school staff: the principal, teachers, aides, support staff, bus drivers, and security guards.

Building upon this synergistic and coordinated use of the MegaSkills Programs to create a school-wide environment, the school selects at least three school improvement areas which can reasonably be affected by the MegaSkills intervention, such as discipline or attendance. These are targeted for special focus over the implementation period. With assistance from HSI, school staff develop plans using the MegaSkills to address these issues, and to incorporate these strategies into the overall MegaSkills School implementation plan.

PILOT ADOPTION BY THE MAUPIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Maupin Elementary School in Louisville, Kentucky has been the first school to adopt the MegaSkills School Program. With funding from the Learning Choices grant received by the Jefferson County Public Schools for the support of magnet school programs to help achieve better racial balance in the schools, Maupin piloted the MegaSkills School Program over the period extending from January 1994 through June, 1995.

The Maupin School is an inner-city elementary school, housed in one of the oldest school buildings in Louisville, with an enrollment of approximately 450 students. The immediate neighborhood is now 99% African-American, with large numbers of families living at or near the poverty line. As a magnet school, Maupin draws students who are bused from across the school system to achieve greater racial balance. Eighty percent (80%) of the total school enrollment qualify for free or reduced lunch.

A major emphasis of the Maupin magnet program is the "traditional education" approach, stressing the development of self-esteem through increased competence and achievement and the development of values associated with good citizenship, such as responsibility and respect. The affinity between this "traditional" approach and the MegaSkills is readily apparent. School staff also had some familiarity with the MegaSkills since the school district's Title I Program had been conducting MegaSkills Parent Workshops throughout the district schools for several years. Accordingly, the principal and staff selected the MegaSkills School Program as a logical way to operationalize and extend Maupin's magnet theme of traditional education to create a total, school-wide environment.

As a first step in the adoption process, the principal established a MegaSkills School Committee with direct responsibility for planning and coordinating all program activities. The Committee consists of the principal and key staff, including grade level representatives, Title I and Special Education Resource teachers, the school library media specialist, and the director of Maupin's Family Resource Center.

Initial training in the use of the MegaSkills Essentials classroom curriculum and leader-training for MegaSkills parent workshops was conducted at the school in January, 1994. HSI staff also assisted the MegaSkills School Committee in developing a plan for integrating all the program components into a systematic delivery system for the balance of the 1994 Spring term, focusing on four of the MegaSkills.

In September, 1994, the MegaSkills School Committee, with HSI assistance, developed a plan for the entire 1994-95 school year, focusing on all ten MegaSkills, Training of new staff was also provided. In March, 1995, HSI staff provided training to selected school staff in the new program, The New MegaSkills Bond Connection. HSI also provided technical assistance through telephone consultation and site visits over the implementation period.

DOCUMENTATION/EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

Formative evaluation and the collection of data was provided by Dr. Denzell Edge of the Special Education Department, University of Louisville throughout the period of program implementation. An interim evaluation report was developed in the summer of 1994, based on the initial implementation of the program over the four months of the Spring term, February-June, 1994.

This report focuses, therefore, on the full school year of implementation extending from September, 1994 through June, 1995. Sources of data include on-going observations and meetings with the MegaSkills Committee by the University of Louisville on-site evaluator, year-end focus group questions for the Committee,

year-end surveys of professional staff, parent workshop leaders and support staff; pre/post surveys of almost 50% of the student body (N = 193) and of a small convenience sample of parents (N = 10); and the analysis of internal records and documents such as attendance records, discipline referrals, parent workshop attendance logs and feedback sheets, and school newsletters and announcements.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION OVER 1994-95

This section discusses the extent to which the school was able to implement program activities according to the plan and schedule developed for the 94-95 school year.

Use and Integration of the MegaSkills Essentials Classroom Curriculum:

The goal of the program was for all instructional staff to teach the ten MegaSkills integrating the lessons into the regular academic curriculum. The year-end professional staff survey (N = 23) indicates that considerable progress was made toward reaching this goal. Seventeen (17) teachers, representing 74% of the respondents, reported that they used the curriculum in their classroom. All of these teachers reported using the curriculum on at least a monthly basis, and a large majority indicated use on either a daily (7 responses) or weekly (6 responses) basis. The modal time spent on each lesson was 20-30 minutes with a range from 5 minutes to 45 minutes or more (integrated with other subject matter) reported. All ten MegaSkills were covered with approximately three weeks devoted to each one; school staff kept together so that the entire school was focused on the same MegaSkill at the same time.

Twelve respondents had used the program in both the 93-94 and 94-95 school years, and eleven of these (92%) reported more success in using the curriculum in the second year. There was broad consensus among the teaching staff that exposure to the program in the previous spring provided a base of student awareness on which to build, and the teachers themselves were more comfortable with the curriculum, finding it easier to integrate into the regular academic program.

MegaSkills Parent Workshops:

The trained MegaSkills Parent Workshop leaders, who included some paraprofessionals and parent leaders, worked in teams to provide MegaSkills workshops for parents. A certified teacher participated as part of each team. Six of the workshops in the parent workshop series were scheduled and conducted at Maupin over the school year. Most of the Workshops focused on two MegaSkills;

however, the March session focused entirely on problem solving, and the April session was devoted to Common Sense and a final wrap-up evaluation of the program. The workshop schedule was coordinated with the pace of the classroom program so that parents and students would be learning about the same MegaSkill in approximately the same time period.

Two sessions were conducted for each workshop; one at 1:30 in the afternoon for parents who could attend during the day, and one at 6:30 for parents who could attend in the evenings. To facilitate participation, baby sitting was provided, and transportation was made available to parents who had no other way to attend the sessions.

The following summarizes the parent participation in the workshops, conducted in English, held at Maupin school:

October 20, 1994	26 parents
November 17, 1994	30
January 19, 1995	21
February 16, 1995	21
March 16, 1995	19
April 20, 1995	21
Total parent attendance at Maupin	138

In addition two parent workshops, were conducted in Vietnamese at the Rutherford Housing Project where a number of Vietnamese families with children at Maupin reside. Although the number of parents participating was rather small, school staff felt that this represented a significant breakthrough to language minority families with little prior involvement in the school, and that further efforts could be built upon this initial outreach to Vietnamese families.

ESL MegaSkills Parent Workshops in Vietnamese:

November 2, 1994	7 parents
February 9, 1995	4 parents
Total parent participation in the workshop program	**149**

Workshop leaders also reported that although a number of parents attended only one or two workshops, there was a core group of approximately 12 parents who consistently attended all the meetings.

Use of the New MegaSkills Bond Program:

HSI's newest training program was developed over the summer and fall of 1994 and placed into the field in 1995. Training in this program was provided to a core group of Maupin staff in March, 1995. Discussion with the MegaSkills Committee indicates that this training has not yet been effectively integrated into the overall MegaSkills School Program. There appear to be several reasons for this:

- By the time the training was provided, the MegaSkills school plan for 1994-95 was already in place and a full complement of activities had been scheduled.

- The Jefferson County Public Schools has not yet moved on a system-wide basis toward the development of the school-parent compacts mandated for Title I programs, one of the major areas of focus of the Bond training. Parents in the Maupin traditional magnet program sign a commitment, similar in concept to the compact, but that has not been highly emphasized or extended to all parents in the school.

- Maupin has a staffed Family Resource Center and already provides a variety of parent involvement programs and opportunities in addition to the MegaSkills workshops. It was felt that the school was already doing a number of the kinds of parent outreach covered in the training.

- Some of the staff receiving the Bond training reported that they felt rather uncertain as to the purposes and uses of the training.

Creating a School-Wide MegaSkills Environment:

Creating a school-wide environment has involved several components: visual emphasis on the MegaSkills throughout the school; enhanced student awareness through announcements, awards and recognitions; and symbolic reinforcements such as kick-off assemblies and songs.

The process of creating a school-wide MegaSkills environment began in the spring of 1994 and continued throughout the 94-95 school year. MegaSkills posters are prominently displayed in every classroom; the MegaSkills are displayed in banners in the hallways and are posted in the cafeteria as well. Students recite the MegaSkills motto as part of the opening exercises of the school, and "MegaStars," children showing MegaSkills in a special way, are recognized over the public address system each afternoon. A MegaSkills theme song has been written and is sung at assemblies and other special occasions.

Involving support staff is also a critical aspect of creating the MegaSkills environment. A year-end survey of support staff, including teaching assistants, clerical, custodial, and security staff, indicates that they have been involved in a variety of ways.

Of the eighteen (18) respondents to the support staff survey:

17 indicated that have used MegaSkills terms to praise students
10 handed out MegaSkills tokens or letters to reward positive behaviors
10 provided names of students or classes for recognition of MegaSkills behaviors

As a further example of the involvement of support staff, a member of the MegaSkills Committee reported that the security guard had kept two students from fighting by reminding them to use their MegaSkills to solve their problems in a different way.

School Improvement Areas for Special Focus:

The MegaSkills Committee continued in 1994-95 the three school improvement areas for special focus first identified in the spring of 1994: Building a Sense of Competence, Reducing Disciplinary Incidents, and Maintaining/Improving Attendance. Activities involving both school staff and parents were carried out over the year in accordance with the master implementation schedule. Disciplinary referrals were tracked during the year and coded as to the students involved, where they occurred and the reason for the referral. Additional recognitions were built in for both individual students and classes with good attendance. For example, the principal announced the classes with perfect attendance at the end of each school day.

A fourth area of focus, establishing a parent/teacher/student commitment form for school wide use in conjunction with the school system's increased emphasis on regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences, was identified at the planning stage but not fully implemented. Emphasis was, however, placed on getting a good turn out of parents at scheduled conferences.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM ON STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND THE SCHOOL

This section addresses the outcomes of the program for students, families, and the school as a whole.

Students:

Classroom teachers were strongly of the opinion that students had developed more positive behaviors and attitudes in a number of categories. The response of teachers on the end-of-year survey is indicated below:

"Do you think your students showed any changes in the following attitudes and behaviors over the past year?"

	YES	UNSURE	NO
a. More respectful and considerate of others	12 (92%)	1	0
b. More able to work cooperatively	14 (93%)	0	1
c. Presented fewer discipline problems	13 (93%)	0	1
d. More responsible in doing school work	13 (93%)	1	0
e. More interest in school	12 (86%)	0	2
f. More able to concentrate and pay attention	9 (69%)	3	1
g. Displayed more initiative and self reliance	12 (86%)	1	1

Responses by teachers on the open-ended questions on the survey corroborate these findings. Among the benefits they indicated students gained from the program were: knowledge of making choices that are good for themselves; manners; positive actions toward each other; respecting others; more self-confident; self pride; more response; fewer behavior problems; life long academic and social skills." (Appendix B: Teaching Staff End of Year Survey).

Students were surveyed at the beginning and end of the school year as to how often they thought they used the MegaSkills. A statement defining each MegaSkill was provided and students were asked whether that described them never, sometimes, often, and always.

Example: Confidence: I feel I am able to do it and am willing to try.

Never Sometimes Often Always

One hundred ninety-three (193) pre and post surveys were received for a response rate of over 50% of student body. The most striking change in comparing the pre and post results is that the number responding "always" declined considerably from the pre to the post test. This was consistent for every MegaSkills except Problem Solving where there was a small increase in the percent who answered "always." At the same time there was a pattern of responses shifting from "never" and "sometimes" to "often." (Appendix F: Student Self-Assesment in the MegaSkills).

These data strongly suggest that students became more thoughtful and aware of their behavior as they studied the MegaSkills over the year and more able to appraise their own actions and attitudes self-critically on the post test. This analysis is consistent with teacher findings of more awareness and understanding of the MegaSkills concepts and what they operationally mean in terms of attitude and behavior.

A small sample (N = 10) of parents participating in the MegaSkills workshop program was also surveyed as to changes in their children's behaviors. Only one parent reported no noticeable differences. Responses from the other parents included: more eager to do homework, help keep each other motivated, more confident, thinks more before doing (2 responses), communicates well with others, more manners and respect for people." (Appendix G: Parent Assesment of their Children's MegaSkills).

Support Staff (N = 18) were unanimous in reporting improvement in the behavior of the students with whom they came into contact. (Appendix D: Support Staff End of Year Survey).

The teacher, student, parent, and support staff data are consistent in finding that positive changes in student's attitudes and behaviors have occurred. Areas particularly singled out in teachers' and parents' comments include: self-awareness, motivation, confidence, teamwork, respect and consideration for others.

Parents: The parent workshop leaders (N = 12) reported positive changes and growth in the parents attending their workshops. Among these were the following:

- Better understanding of what their children are doing in school
- More open about concerns they have about their children
- More willing and able to discuss with teachers how to treat their children
- More able to deal with their children's problems and monitor their activities
- More confident of their own abilities and strengths and more supportive to each other
- More involved with other school activities.

Almost all the workshop leaders (11 = yes, 1 = no) believed that the parents attending the workshops did the activities provided with their children at home. Evidence cited in support of this finding included parents reporting back at subsequent workshop sessions and children telling their teachers what they had done with their parents at home.

Most of the workshop leaders believed that the parents knew that the workshops were provided as part of a school-wide MegaSkills program (10 = yes, 1 = no), and most of them agreed that this knowledge had a positive effect upon their attendance

and participation (9 = yes, 2 = no). The workshop leaders felt it was important that the same MegaSkills were being worked on at school and at home, and that the parents were learning the importance of the MegaSkills right along with the children.

In addition to positive changes in relating and working with their own children, workshop leaders indicated that parents benefited by getting to know teachers and the school much better and by becoming friends and sharing with other parents. (Appendix C: Parent Workshop Leaders End of Year Survey).

Data from the small sample of parents (N = 10) surveyed support these findings. Parents cited a number of activities that they had done with their children and indicated that children were able to take more responsibility for chores around the house. The following are examples reported by parents of successful results of the MegaSkills training. (Appendix G: Parent Assessment of their Children's MegaSkills).

- My child and I communicate more.
- Realizing school can be stressful and being supportive.
- It makes me think of how I should deal with things in my life to let my child see how to deal with things in her life.
- Sitting down and talking about school.
- My ability to communicate with other parents and finding out how much in common we all have!
- (My child) willing to do his homework
- The ability to relate with my children and to understand what they are referring to.
- I have a better idea of how to use these skills in our home life as well as in the work world.

The School:

School Climate: There was widespread agreement among the school staff that the MegaSkills School Program contributed to a more positive school climate. The following are the responses from teachers and workshop leaders on the end-of year surveys:

"Do you think the MegaSkills School Program has helped to create a more positive school climate?"

	Yes	No
Teachers and professional staff	19	2
Parent Workshop leaders	11	0

Discipline: As indicated above, there was a widespread perception among school staff that discipline had improved over the school year. Disciplinary referrals were also tracked over the two years of program implementation and codes by student, person making the referral, and reason for the referral, i.e. breaking school rule, rude and discourteous, not following directions, profanity, fighting, etc. Surprisingly, the number of referrals actually increased from the 93-94 to the 94-95 school year. (Appendix H: Student Disciplinary Reports).

While the difference in the number of referrals for the two years is probably not very statistically significant (from 786 to 821 referrals, an increase of 4%), these data appear inconsistent with the perception of teachers and staff that student behavior was improving, a view not only reported in the end-of-year surveys but consistently stated by MegaSkills committee members and staff in meetings and contact throughout the year. The most logical explanation for this inconsistency is the phenomenon known as "rising expectations." Over the two year period, teachers and staff were raising their expectations of acceptable student behavior. Profanity or other inappropriate behavior which might have been previously overlooked now became grounds for referral. It had been expected that the impact of the program on discipline would be a reduction in the number of referrals. However, it may well be that the actual impact was to raise and enforce more consistently standards of student conduct.

Attendance at Parent Conferences: In 1994-95 The Jefferson County Public Schools mandated parent conferences to be held in the fall and spring of the year. Achieving a good parent attendance rate at these conferences was an area of special focus for the program. In the fall of 1994, 333 parents attended conferences; and in the spring of 1995, 197 attended. (Appendix I: Analysis of Parent Conference Day Attendance).

Summary Staff Perceptions about the Program: The following indicate the responses of teachers, parent workshop leaders and support staff to questions about the overall value of the program and its continuation at Maupin:

"Would you recommend the MegaSkills School Program to other schools and teachers?"

	Yes	No
Teachers	20 (95%)	1
Parent Workshop Leaders	12 (100%)	0

"Do you think the MegaSkills School Program should be continued at Maupin?"

Teachers	20 (95%)	1
Parent Workshop Leaders	12 (100%)	0
Support Staff	18 (100%)	0

Additional follow-up data: Follow-up data on the Maupin Elementary School obtained in the fall of 1995 suggest that the school continues to make positive changes. The data indicate a substantial increase in student attendance. With respect to parents, three hundred seventy (370) parent conferences were scheduled, and 248 parents (67%) were actually able to attend on the scheduled date of November 7. Also, during the fall, the school was recognized by the Kentucky Department of Education as one of the few schools in Kentucky to be awarded the Honors Certificate for Academic Improvement. Under this program, schools demonstrating significant improvement on the evaluative data gathered by the Kentucky Assessment Profile were eligible to receive a cash bonus. Based on the academic growth demonstrated over 1993-95, all staff received cash bonuses ranging from $1,300 to $1,800.

PROGRAM INSTITUTIONALIZATION: PLANS AND DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROGRAM IN 1995-96 AND BEYOND

The Learning Choices grant provided funding for the HSI training and technical assistance needed to implement the program over the period extending from January,1994 through the end of the 94-95 school year. Continuation of the program beyond the funding period is at the discretion of the school and must be supported through the school's internal resources. As indicated above, school staff were virtually unanimous that the program should be continued.

A change of principal also occurred with the advent of the 1995-96 school year. However, the new principal is fully committed to continuing the program. The MegaSkills Committee has been kept in place and a schedule of activities, modeled on the1994-95 plan, has been developed and is being implemented. The entire ten MegaSkills will be covered in the classroom over the school year. Six parent workshops with additional outreach to the Vietnamese community have again been scheduled, and the focus on improving discipline and attendance continues.

Discussion with the principal and MegaSkills Committee indicates that they consider the MegaSkills School approach to be fully integrated and institutionalized within the Maupin School program. The degree to which MegaSkills has become a part of Maupin's identity is illustrated by the descriptive phrase, "The MegaSkills School," which appears just beneath the name of the school on parent newsletters and other communications.

As Maupin enters the third year of the program, it is important to note that the MegaSkills Committee believes that the opportunities for curricular integration are so many and varied that the MegaSkills are still fresh and exciting for students. Staff believe they will continue to see positive growth and change in student attitudes and behaviors through the multi-year use of the program. Long term use of the program does, however, create the need to find cost effective ways of training new staff as teachers transfer or retire.

Plans are already under way for continuation of the program in 1996-97. Because of the large number of children eligible to receive Title I services, Maupin has the opportunity to become a school-wide Title I program. The school wants to use some of these additional Title I resources to establish the position of MegaSkills School Coordinator so that one staff member can be freed from other duties to have enough time to coordinate the many component activities of the MegaSkills School program, to assist staff in planning new and creative ways of integrating MegaSkills into the curriculum, and to orient and coach new staff in the use of the program.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data consistently point to the conclusion that the Maupin School has experienced considerable success in implementing that MegaSkills School Program and that the program has had a number of beneficial outcomes for students, parents, and the school as a whole.

Outcomes

The program has helped students develop positive attitudes and behaviors needed for success in school and in later life. Among those especially cited are increased self-awareness and thinking before acting, confidence, motivation, teamwork, respect and consideration for others.

Parents participating in the workshop program report they are able to do new activities with their children at home that reinforce and strengthen positive skills and attitudes. At the same time the workshops help parents to develop parenting skills and the ability to relate better to their children. Parent participation in the workshops has also led to more and better communication between parents and teachers and greater involvement in school activities.

The program has had a number of school-wide effects. There is widespread agreement among teachers and staff that it has contributed to fostering a more positive school climate. It has helped to raise the expectations of teachers and staff as to student behavior, which explains why discipline referrals did not drop over the

two year period. The program has also provided constructive roles and ways for support staff to interact with children to reinforce the message of the MegaSkills. MegaSkills created a common language for teachers, staff, students and parents to discuss and understand student attitudes and behavior. Sharing this common language has in turn helped to create a greater sense of community.

There is widespread agreement among teachers, parent workshop leaders and staff as to the program's value and contributions. Their commitment to the program is demonstrated by the degree to which the school has been able to institutionalize and continue it beyond the funding period.

Implementation

Inasmuch as the adoption of the program by Maupin constituted a pilot effort to create the first MegaSkills School, it is useful to comment on some issues and lessons learned regarding program implementation.

The MegaSkills School is a complex program, bringing together and coordinating a number of parts. Staff believed that this school-wide approach did help to create a dynamic or synergy so that the component activities supported and reinforced each other. Teachers reported that it was easier to use the program in the classroom because it was reinforced throughout the school. At the same time, students responded to using the MegaSkills in the cafeteria, the playground or at home because they had learned about them in class.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the MegaSkills Essentials for the Classroom curriculum provided the undergirding for the entire program. It was through the classroom that all students were reached, and it was the classroom instruction that provided opportunity and context for learning the MegaSkills. A strong classroom component is prerequisite to creating a MegaSkills School.

The number of parents reached by the parent workshop component was not large in relation to the total number of families in the school. The staff, however, felt that number participating was an accomplishment given the demographics of the school. Moreover, they indicated that they considered the parent workshops an important component of the program, which effected outreach to families who might otherwise not become involved in the school, such as the Vietnamese community, and provided useful reinforcement for the children whose parents participated. Follow-up data from the fall of 1995 indicate that parent workshops continue to be attended by approximately the same numbers of parents as in 1994-95, and the Maupin staff are comfortable with this level of participation.

The roles of the principal and the MegaSkills Committee are key to the successful implementation of a school-wide program of this type. This pilot effort was fortunate in having both a principal and a steering committee who shared a common vision of the program and who were enthusiastic and proactive in translating the vision into reality. The principal was comfortable in delegating many of the details of planning and coordinating to the Committee, and the Committee in turn served as the link to the rest of the staff and school community and as the glue to hold the program together. As boosters and problem solvers, the Committee were instrumental in creating "buy-in" of the program by the other teachers and staff.

Planning and scheduling component activities over the school year proved to be more labor intensive and time-consuming than HSI staff had originally anticipated. Given the numerous constraints in providing blocks of released time for teachers and staff, HSI should explore ways of facilitating more of this planning through consultation in advance of the initial training so that everything does not have to be done at once. On the other hand, the detailed planning and scheduling paid off both in the smooth flow of activities over the year and in providing a template for continuation of the program.

The overall time-frame of two years for implementation of the program seems appropriate. The acceptance and comfort level of teachers in using the classroom program increased markedly from the first to the second year. The two-year period also provided sufficient time for staff to experiment with different kinds of activities, to repeat and improve upon what was working, and to become bolder and more risk-taking in planning for the second year. This two-year base of experience has in turn facilitated continuation and institutionalization of the program after the termination of external funding and support.

The degree to which the school has been able to maintain the program in the third year out of its own resources is remarkable. All essential program components and activities are continuing. Training of new staff, particularly for using the classroom curriculum is, however, an issue which HSI and the school need to address as staff retire and transfer or additional teachers are hired due to increased enrollment.

In summary, the experience of the pilot adoption by the Maupin Elementary School demonstrates that the MegaSkills School is a workable program which provides substantial benefits in the areas of positive student behaviors and attitudes, parent involvement, and improved school climate. The degree to which the pilot school was able to implement and institutionalize the program over a two year period also indicates that the MegaSkills School is a highly replicable model.

MegaSkills® Education Center
of
The Home and School Institute, Inc.

Helping families build children's achievement in school and beyond
1500 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202) 466-3633

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Fact Sheet: About HSI/MegaSkills Education Center

The major focus of the work of the nonprofit Home and School Institute (HSI), with its MegaSkills® Education Center, is to help families build children's achievement in school and beyond. HSI works with school districts, federal, state and local government agencies, businesses and community organizations. Since 1964, HSI has developed systematic training and materials for total community educational involvement. Family literacy and the needs of at-risk students are fundamental concerns of the Institute.

MegaSkills Leader Training Seminars are available on-site for training to conduct MegaSkills Workshops. The workshops provide structured opportunities for families to learn innovative ways to help children develop **MegaSkills**, the habits, attitudes and behaviors that determine achievement. They include Confidence, Motivation, Effort, Responsibility, Initiative, Perseverance, Caring, Teamwork, Common Sense and Problem Solving. **MegaSkills Essentials for the Classroom** provides training for teachers to teach MegaSkills directly to children in the classroom, with full curriculum for grades K-8. **The New MegaSkills Bond** builds school and family/ community partnerships. **MegaSkills Schools** combine all of the trainings in an achievement process for school wide programs.

Over 8,600 registrants have completed MegaSkills training programs now being conducted in 48 states: 6,134 MegaSkills Leaders are conducting parent workshops reaching over 73,000 families, 1,952 teachers have been trained in Classroom Essentials reaching over 48,000 children and their parents. The Bond program, starting in 1995, has trained 546 participants to work in school teams. Families served by HSI programs include African-American, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American.

Support for developing and extending the MegaSkills Programs has come from Kraft Foods, the MacArthur Foundation, The Sears-Roebuck Foundation, and IBM. The program is a model in New Directions for Parent Involvement. The workshops are based on the highly acclaimed book, ***MegaSkills***, by Dr. Dorothy Rich, HSI President.

Memphis State University researchers, evaluating the impact of MegaSkills, reported: TV watching for children decreased; with increased time on homework. Austin, Texas, school district research indicates that MegaSkills students showed higher scores on achievement tests with fewer discipline problems. The MegaSkills Program has received the A + for Breaking the Mold Award from the US Department of Education and the 1996 Golden Apple Award from Working Mother Magazine and Teachers College, Columbia University.

The work of HSI, highlighted in videos by Agency for Instructional Technology and Video Journal, has been featured in the Washington Post, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Reader's Digest, NBC Today, Good Morning America and numerous professional education publications. With over 20 years of experience, the Institute provides coordinated, tested programs for school and community to ensure educational progress in the 1990s.

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UNIVERSITY of LOUISVILLE

Maupin MegaSkills® School-Wide Program

Final Evaluation/Executive Summary

(Spring 1996)

- **Characteristics**
- **Program Impact**
- **Implementation**
- **Profile**
- **Adoption**

The pilot adoption by the Maupin Elementary School (1994-95, Louisville, KY) has demonstrated that the MegaSkills School-Wide Program provides substantial benefits in the areas of positive student behaviors and attitudes, parent involvement, and school climate.

The success of the school in implementing and institutionalizing the program indicates that MegaSkills School-Wide is a model with high potential for successful Compensatory Education replication.

Areas of particular strength of MegaSkills School-Wide Program as documented by teachers and parents are:

1. Building the collaborative network of teachers, families and students in support of student achievement.

2. Providing widely accepted common language about student behavior and discipline for school/home communication and understanding.

3. Developing positive skills and attitudes for student learning readiness and pro-social behavior.

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Characteristics of the MegaSkills School-Wide Program

MegaSkills School-Wide brings together all of The Home and School Institute's (HSI) MegaSkills programs which focus on helping children develop the skills and attitudes needed for success in school and later life. The MegaSkills, which have been drawn from school report cards and job evaluations, are: confidence, motivation, effort, responsibility, initiative, perseverance, caring, teamwork, common sense and problem solving.

HSI training programs are brought together in a systematic delivery system to create a school-wide MegaSkills environment: **MegaSkills Essentials for the Classroom**, a curriculum for teaching the MegaSkills directly to students, **MegaSkills Leader Training for Parent Workshops** focusing on teaching parents to develop their children's MegaSkills at home, and **The New MegaSkills Bond** which builds parent and school partnership in support of academic achievement.

MegaSkills School-Wide provides complementary roles for all school staff and parents so that the MegaSkills are consistently taught and reinforced in the classroom, the home, and throughout the school. In addition the school chooses school improvement areas, such as discipline or attendance, upon which the MegaSkills programs can be expected to have impact, and develops strategies and activities to build these special achievement areas.

Program Impact: Key Findings

Students

Data provided consistent findings of positive changes in student attitudes and behaviors:

- High percentage of teachers indicated that students had developed more positive behaviors and attitudes in a number of areas:

  More respectful and considerate of others (92%)
  More able to work cooperatively (93%)
  Fewer discipline problems (93%)
  More responsible (93%)
  More confident and self-reliant (86%)
  More interest in school (86%)

- Parents reported similar changes in their children's behaviors.

- Student self-report data from pre-test to post-test indicated growth in self-awareness and the ability to be self-critical in assessing their own behavior.

The School

The data indicate that the program had school-wide effects:

- There was strong agreement among school staff (90% of the teachers and 100% of the parent workshop leaders) that the program had improved school climate.
- The program contributed to raising the expectations of student behavior at the school over the two year pilot period and staff reported improved discipline.
- The program helped to increase the involvement of parents in school activities and attendance at parent-teacher conferences.
- The program provided a common language about student attitudes and behaviors which facilitated understanding and communication among teachers, parents, students, and support staff.
- The common language and complementary roles for school staff and parents helped to develop a greater sense of community within the school.

Parents

Workshop leaders reported the following parent changes as a result of workshop participation:

- Better understanding of what their children do in school
- More willing and able to discuss with teachers how to treat their children
- More able to deal with their children's problems and monitor their activities
- More confident of their own abilities and strengths
- More supportive of each other
- More involved with school activities

Parents reported similar behaviors:

- Ability to relate and communicate to their children better
- Talking about school with their children
- Realizing that school can be stressful and being supportive of their children
- Importance of communicating with other parents and finding how much they have in common

Implementation of the Program: Key Findings

- Maupin School experienced considerable success in implementing the components of the program. The 1994-95 data indicate:

  Seventeen classroom and resource teachers used the classroom curriculum on a regular basis.
  A series of six workshops, with a day and evening session offered for each one, were given at the school. Average attendance was 23 parents per workshop.
  Seventeen support staff reported involvement in the program -- office staff, bus drivers, nutrition and maintenance and custodial staff.
  A school-wide MegaSkills environment was created through posters, daily exercises and announcements, special assemblies and ceremonies, and recognitions for students using MegaSkills.

- The school-wide approach had a positive impact on all program activities.

- The school's MegaSkills Committee played a key role in implementing the program by planning and coordinating activities. They were problem-solvers and boosters to involve staff and parents.

- Two years was an appropriate timeframe for implementing and institutionalizing the program. Teachers reported more success with the classroom curriculum in the second year as they became more experienced and students brought knowledge of the MegaSkills on which to build.

Profile of the Maupin School

Maupin School is an inner-city elementary school with an enrollment of approximately 450 students. The immediate neighborhood is 99% African-American, with large numbers of families living at or near the poverty line. As a magnet school, Maupin draws students from across the school system to achieve greater racial balance. Eighty percent (80%) of the total school enrollment qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Adoption of the MegaSkills School-Wide Program

With funding from Jefferson County's Learning Choices grant, the program was piloted as the first MegaSkills School during the period extending from January, 1994 through June 1995. HSI provided the complete MegaSkills curricula and HSI staff provided initial and follow-up school-wide training in the program components. Working with the Maupin School MegaSkills Committee, HSI monitored the program and provided ongoing technical assistance throughout this period.

The program has become institutionalized at the Maupin School over the two year period and is continuing without the support of external funding.

Prepared by:

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(March 1996)

For More Information:

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Allen County, Indiana, Chamber of Commerce, MegaSkills® Program Wins 1996 Golden Apple Award

The Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce has won the Golden Apple Award in honor of the Allen County MegaSkills Program which it spearheaded beginning in 1991 to ensure that parents are no longer the missing link in children's education.

The award, first of its kind, is sponsored by *Working Mother* Magazine and Teachers College, Columbia University in cooperation with the US Department of Education.

To help parents, the Fort Wayne Chamber chose MegaSkills, a nationally established school/family involvement program that teaches parents how to help their children develop MegaSkills: Confidence, Motivation, Effort, Responsibility, Initiative, Perseverance, Caring, Teamwork, Common Sense, Problem Solving.

MegaSkills are the "inner engines of learning" and were identified from school report cards and job evaluation forms. The Fort Wayne committee identified two ways to offer the MegaSkills workshop program to parents: In the workplace for employees who are parents of preschool and school-aged children; Through schools and social service agencies for parents outside the mainstream workforce.

The Allen County MegaSkills program has succeeded in linking different sectors in the community -- private business, schools and the non-profit sector. The program is administered by the Chamber's Workforce Development Office, which arranges MegaSkills leader training and coordinates workshop schedules. Having the Chamber as its base enables all school districts to participate equally. This model, useful for all communities, makes it possible to serve a wide number of districts. time.

Key Chamber and business community leadership for this initiative include: Paul Laux, President and CEO of the Chamber; Bettye Poignard, Vice-President of Workforce Development; Jim Bentley, Director of Human Resources, Fort Wayne Newspapers and Business Chair of the MegaSkill Committee; and, Karen Kimmell, Coordinator of the MegaSkills Program.

For additional information on the Allen County Program, contact Karen Kimmel at Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce, 826 Ewing Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46802, (219) 424-1435.

For additional information on the MegaSkills Programs for sponsorship by Chambers, contact HSI, MegaSkills Education Center, 1500 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005, tel. (202) 466-3633; fax (202) 833-1400. Dr. Dorothy Rich, developer of the MegaSkills Program, serves on the Advisory Committee for the Center of Workforce Preparation, US Chamber of Commerce.